CLAIMS:

We claim:

1.   A method for selecting and matching personal profiles based on personal characteristics and psychological traits, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

(a) creating a profile of a user based on the user's personal characteristics and answers to psychological test items, wherein the profile further includes user preferences concerning potential partners;

(b) applying a plurality of characteristic filters to a plurality of target profiles in a database, wherein each target profile passes through a given characteristic filter only if the characteristic in question in both the target profile and the user profile complies with the filter's rule, and wherein the filter may be influenced by preferences in both the user profile and the plurality of target profiles;

(c) calculating a compatibility index for the user relative to each target profile that passes through all of the characteristic filters, wherein the compatibility index is calculated by the following steps:

> scoring individual personal characteristics and weighing the scores according to empirically derived models and user preferences to produce a combined personal characteristic score;

> scoring the psychological data according to matching algorithms derived from empirical research on relationships; and

> weighing the psychological data score relative to the combined personal characteristic score according to the user's gender and preference regarding short-term versus long-term relationships; and

(d) creating and displaying a match list that ranks target profiles relative to the user according to their respective compatibility index.

2.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the personal characteristics include:
socio-demographic information;
physical characteristics; and

interests and activities.

3.   The method according to claim 1, wherein some of the plurality of characteristic filters use binary scoring, wherein:

if a characteristic in a target profile has a true value, the filter assigns a normal score to the characteristic; and

if the characteristic has a false value, the filter excludes the target profile.

4.   The method according to claim 1, wherein some of the plurality of characteristic filters use both sliding scale scoring and binary scoring, wherein the filter defines a preferred value range, and a constraint value that is outside the value range, wherein:

if the value of a characteristic in a target profile falls within the preferred range the filter assigns a normalized score to the characteristic;

if the value of the characteristic falls outside the preferred range but does not exceed the constraint value, the filter assigns a reduced normalized score to the characteristic according to a sliding scale; and

if the value of the characteristic exceeds the constraint value, the filter excludes the target profile.

5.   The method according to claim 1, wherein characteristic filters are assigned to particular personal characteristics according to the findings of empirical research concerning which characteristics are rated as being important to relationship success.

6.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the personal characteristics that have associated filters include at least one of the following:

gender;

age;

ethnicity;

religion;

language;

location; and

attractiveness.

7.   The method according to claim 1, wherein a user may manually add filters to specific characteristics that do not already have associated filters.

8.   The method according to claim 1, wherein a characteristic filter is ignored if preferences in both the user profile and target profile specify that the characteristic in question is not important.

9.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the psychological test items may relate to the following traits:

   communication style;

   conflict resolution;

   sexuality;

   social life;

   values hierarchy;

   money attitudes;

   gender roles;

   attachment to others;

   parenting approach;

   stress reaction;

   self image;

   dominance in relationships;

   conscientiousness;

   adventurousness;

   rigidity; and

   integrity.

10.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the compatibility index further comprises:

   a user score that measures how well the target matches the user's preferences;

   a target score that measures how well the user matches the target's preferences; and

a paired score that is a weighted average of the user and target scores.

11.   The method according to claim 10, wherein the paired score decreases as variance between the user score and target score increases.

12.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the psychological data score is weighed more heavily if the user is seeking a potential life partner than if the user is seeking a dating partner.

13.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the psychological data score is weighed more heavily for women than for men.

14.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the match list further comprises detailed information about the compatibility between the user and each target with respect to individual characteristics.

15.   A computer program product in a computer readable medium for selecting and matching personal profiles based on personal characteristics and psychological traits, the computer program product comprising:

(a) first instructions for creating a profile of a user based on the user's personal characteristics and answers to psychological test items, wherein the profile further includes user preferences concerning potential partners;

(b) second instructions for applying a plurality of characteristic filters to a plurality of target profiles in a database, wherein each target profile passes through a given characteristic filter only if the characteristic in question in both the target profile and the user profile complies with the filter's rule, and wherein the filter may be influenced by preferences in both the user profile and the plurality of target profiles;

(c) third instructions for calculating a compatibility index for the user relative to each target profile that passes through all of the characteristic filters, wherein the compatibility index is calculated by the following steps:

scoring individual personal characteristics and weighing the scores according to empirically derived models and user preferences to produce a combined personal characteristic score;

scoring the psychological data according to matching algorithms derived from empirical research on relationships; and

weighing the psychological data score relative to the combined personal characteristic score according to the user's gender and preference regarding short-term versus long-term relationships; and

(d) fourth instructions for creating and displaying a match list that ranks target profiles relative to the user according to their respective compatibility index.

16.   The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the personal characteristics include:

socio-demographic information;

physical characteristics; and

interests and activities.

17.   The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein some of the plurality of characteristic filters use binary scoring, wherein:

if a characteristic in a target profile has a true value, the filter assigns a normal score to the characteristic; and

if the characteristic has a false value, the filter excludes the target profile.

18.   The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein some of the plurality of characteristic filters use both sliding scale scoring and binary scoring, wherein the filter defines a preferred value range and a constraint value that is outside the value range, wherein:

if the value of a characteristic in a target profile falls within the preferred range the filter assigns a normalized score to the characteristic;

if the value of the characteristic falls outside the preferred range but does not exceed the constraint value, the filter assigns a reduced normalized score to the characteristic according to a sliding scale; and

if the value of the characteristic exceeds the constraint value, the filter excludes the target profile.

19. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein characteristic filters are assigned to particular personal characteristics according to the findings of empirical research concerning which characteristics are rated as being important to relationship success.

20. The computer program product according to claim 19, wherein the personal characteristics that have associated filters include at least one of the following:
    gender;
    age;
    ethnicity;
    religion;
    language;
    location; and
    attractiveness.

21. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein a user may manually add filters to specific characteristics that do not already have associated filters.

22. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein a characteristic filter is ignored if preferences in both the user profile and target profile specify that the characteristic in question is not important.

23. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the psychological test items may relate to the following traits:
    communication style;
    conflict resolution;
    sexuality;
    social life;
    values hierarchy;

money attitudes;

gender roles;

attachment to others;

parenting approach;

stress reaction;

self image;

dominance in relationships;

conscientiousness;

adventurousness;

rigidity; and

integrity.

24. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the compatibility index further comprises:

a user score that measures how well the target matches the user's preferences;

a target score that measures how well the user matches the target's preferences; and

a paired score that is a weighted average of the user and target scores.

25. The computer program product according to claim 24, wherein the paired score decreases as variance between the user score and target score increases.

26. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the psychological data score is weighed more heavily if the user is seeking a potential life partner than if the user is seeking a dating partner.

27. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the psychological data score is weighed more heavily for women than for men.

28. The computer program product according to claim 15, wherein the match list further comprises detailed information about the compatibility between the user and each target with respect to individual characteristics.

29.   A system for selecting and matching personal profiles based on personal characteristics and psychological traits, the system comprising:

(a) a profiling component for creating a profile of a user based on the user's personal characteristics and answers to psychological test items, wherein the profile further includes user preferences concerning potential partners;

(b) a filtering component that applies a plurality of trait filters to a plurality of target profiles in a database, wherein each target profile passes through a given trait filter only if the trait in question in both the target profile and the user profile complies with the filter's rule, and wherein the filter may be influenced by preferences in both the user profile and the plurality of target profiles;

(c) a calculating components that calculates a compatibility index for the user relative to each target profile that passes through all of the trait filters, wherein the compatibility index is calculated by the following steps:

> scoring individual personal characteristics and weighing the scores according to empirically derived models and user preferences to produce a combined personal characteristic score;
>
> scoring the psychological data according to matching algorithms derived from empirical research on relationships; and
>
> weighing the psychological data score relative to the combined personal characteristic score according to the user's gender and preference regarding short-term versus long-term relationships; and

(d) an organizing component that creates and displays a match list that ranks target profiles relative to the user according to their respective compatibility index.